

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 3-9, 14-16, 18 and 19 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 10-13, 17 and 20 are canceled by this amendment.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 18 and 19 are allowed.

Applicants also thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 16 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have rewritten claim 16 in independent form so as to include all of the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claims 2 and 13, thereby placing this claim in condition for allowance. Claims 3-9, 14 and 15 have been amended so as to depend from rewritten claim 16. Accordingly, claims 3-9, 14 and 15 are considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

II. Claim Rejections

The following claims rejections were presented in the Office Action:

Claims 1-9, 17 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by DE 100 57 848; claims 10-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 100 57 848; and claims 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 100 57 848 in view of Tsutsumi et al. (U.S. 6,903,626).

As noted above, claims 3-9, 14 and 15 have been amended so as to depend from rewritten claim 16. Accordingly, claims 3-9, 14 and 15 are considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding claims 1, 2, 10-13, 17 and 20, as noted above, these claims have been canceled by this amendment.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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